

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Courtney and his wife Audrey today began the week-long SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Challenge, a program of the New London County Food Policy Council, to highlight the challenges facing families that receive SNAP benefits in eastern Connecticut.

"Each day, tens of thousands of families across the Second Congressional District are forced to live on an individual food budget of about \$4. As Congress debates legislation that would cut this invaluable program, I believe it is important for members of Congress like me to understand firsthand the challenges my constituents face," said Congressman Courtney.

"In New London County there are 27,000 people receiving SNAP benefits. Participants of this challenge will come away with a greater understanding of how difficult it is to eat (or feed a family) balanced and nutritious meals on a limited budget. The New London County Food Policy Council not only wants to raise awareness but also promote the health impact of healthy food choices," explained Keith Fontaine, Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer at Backus Hospital and Chair of the New London County Food Policy Council.

SNAP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to put nutritious food within financial reach for low-income households. Many recipients in deep or prolonged poverty struggle to make their benefits last for the entire month and are forced to visit food pantries. The 7-day program will limit the amount of the Congressman and Audrey's individual food purchases to that of a typical SNAP participant – just \$32.59 a week or \$1.59 per meal.

Over 380,000 individuals in Connecticut are receiving SNAP benefits. SNAP is facing deep cuts in Congress – up to \$4 billion a year – as the House debates plans to reduce the nation's budget deficit.

Get the latest on The Challenge from Rep. Courtney:

The Congressman will blog about the experience, its challenges, and lessons learned. Second Congressional District constituents are encouraged to follow what Congressman Courtney is eating on Twitter at

twitter.com/repjoecourtney

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